



(S) Where's the Beef? SIGINT for the Department of Agriculture

FROM: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
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SIGINT supports negotiations, helps keep food supply safe (S)

(S) You may not think that the Department of Agriculture would have much interaction with SID, but in fact SIGINT is a huge contributor to Agriculture's mission.

(TS//SI) The USDA is involved in trade operations to protect and secure a large segment of the U.S. economy. The Secretary of Agriculture, the Deputy, the Undersecretaries, and other sub-cabinet members who are briefed by the WLO Rep on a weekly basis often rely on SIGINT to support their negotiations, and not just to address U.S. farming issues, but international trade issues as well. The leadership team at Agriculture makes routine negotiation decisions and recommendations to their "chain of command" based on SIGINT.

(TS//SI) As you can imagine, not many people within USDA are TS/SCI cleared. However, with our tear-line reporting and write-to-release we can still support USDA leaders. Most recently WLO Rep [REDACTED] briefed the Secretary of Agriculture on key trade issues. Several reports dealt with trade matters that a Deputy Undersecretary was currently negotiating. Having previously checked with USDA security on the Deputy Undersecretary's clearances, the liaison officer knew that he was not cleared for SIGINT.

(TS//SI) The Secretary became very concerned that the Deputy Undersecretary would not have access to the information, which she considered critical to a successful meeting. One of the Undersecretaries at the briefing jumped in and stated that, "NSA does a very clever thing, they report at the 'secret' level too," and pointed out that the Deputy Undersecretary had already seen the reporting. The Secretary was very relieved, turned to the NSA Rep, and stated, "That is very helpful that you (NSA) do that."

(S//SI) NSA has a substantial and proven record in protecting US trade interests and keeping the US food supply safe by providing relevant information to Agriculture. The WLO has established a unique rapport with sub-cabinet members at Agriculture. This relationship allows WLO representatives to attend weekly USDA briefings to ensure NSA is aware of trade issues and upcoming meetings. Additionally, the WLO has access to the Secretary's and other USDA leadership members' calendars to help stay on top of hot issues. The WLO communicates this information to the TOPI's, whose response is nothing short of spectacular.

(TS//SI) Our Canadian partners, as well, deserve credit for their role in the WLO's support to Agriculture. While searching through MAUI*, the WLO often finds CSE reporting on topics of interest to USDA leaders. Through special arrangements with our Canadian partners, USDA now regularly receives this vital and much valued reporting.

(U) While the WLO is simply a conduit of support to Agriculture, the real performers are the TOPIs and our Canadian partners! When things are in full surge mode and information is flowing back and forth, the only word to describe the energy level in the small WLO office is "awesome"!

(U) Notes:

* [MAUI](#) = Multimedia Access User Interface (it is used for retrieving text and multimedia intelligence reports)

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